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Maule - Remarks on Acknowledging Meetings  
of Separatists - 1850

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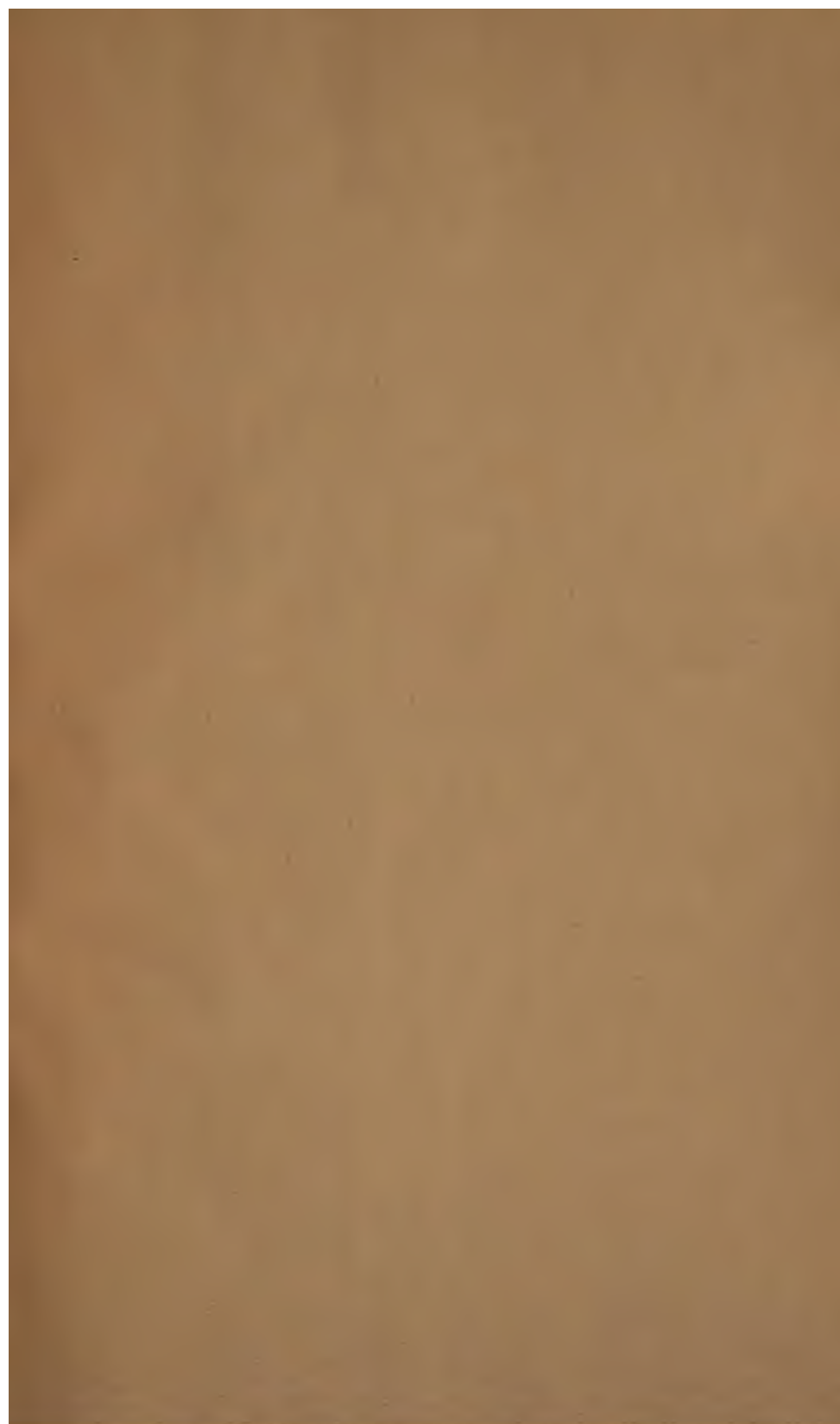


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SOME

EXTRACTS AND REMARKS

ON

ACKNOWLEDGING MEETINGS

OF

SEPARATISTS,

AS THOUGH THEY WERE

THE MEETINGS OF FRIENDS.

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BY

JOSEPH E. MAULE.

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SOME

## EXTRACTS AND REMARKS

### On Acknowledging Meetings of Separatists.

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As there is great danger at the present time, of our Monthly Meetings "acknowledging the Meetings of Separatists, as though they were the Meetings of Friends," by sending certificates to, or receiving certificates from meetings which have become *identified* with Separatists, and thus violating our Discipline and Christian testimony, I have believed it my duty to endeavour to place some facts and observations before Friends for their serious consideration.

In the first place I will state the most prominent *causes* which led to the separation in New England Yearly Meeting, as set forth in a statement of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1849, showing who are the Separatists.

Also the Discipline of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting *by which its members are to be governed in relation to separatists.*

1st Cause.—In the attempt to procure the disownment of a minister for bearing a faithful testimony (from a sense of religious duty) against the unsound doctrines of Jos. John Gurney and others. Of the dangerous tendency of which doctrines, see the following extracts from the "Appeal," page 52, viz: "One *inevitable* consequence which attends *all innovation* upon its religious principles, is the *injury* to the *unity* and *harmony* of the Society."

Also, from the same, on page 62,—“Were the Society to conform to the unscriptural opinions advocated in the work under notice, it would be carried back to the beggarly elements. . . . Thus the *very existence of the Society would be destroyed.*”



2nd Cause.—In the attempt of the Yearly Meeting's Committee to interfere with the exclusive business of a monthly meeting. (South Kingston Monthly Meeting.)

3d Cause.—In the Yearly Meeting's Committee bringing a charge against a member to a monthly meeting, and insisting upon having the monthly meeting to act upon it, when according to the long established order of our religious society, they ought to have laid it before the overseers of the monthly meeting.

4th Cause.—“In the same committee bringing the power and authority of the Yearly Meeting to bear upon the Monthly Meeting, by claiming the right to join the committee of the latter in treating with the Friend, and *refusing to him the right* of opening and explaining what he alleged to be the ground on which he had acted in the discharge of an apprehended duty. The members of the Yearly Meeting's Committee had neither been incorporated with the Monthly Meeting nor appointed to deal with the member.”

5th Cause.—In the Yearly Meeting's Committee objecting to a report signed by seven of a committee of nine members of the monthly meeting, and urging the reception of a report signed by two of that committee, the latter report being strongly objected to by the monthly meeting. “Such a proceeding, is, we think, contrary to any practice in the society that we have ever been acquainted with.”

6th Cause.—“In the attempt made first by the Quarterly Meeting's Committee, and afterwards by the Quarterly Meeting itself, to render null and void the minute of South Kingston Monthly Meeting, which accepted the report in the case of [John Wilbur,] dismissed the charge against him, and restored him to all his rights as a member and minister; and in afterwards taking up his case by another monthly meeting on the *same charge*, and there disowning him without even going through the *regular course prescribed* by discipline.”

7th Cause.—“In disregarding the provision of the Discipline of New England Yearly Meeting in the manner of laying down South Kingston Monthly Meeting by Rhode Island Quarter, and attaching its members to Greenwich Monthly Meeting.”

8th Cause.—“In the manner in which the Quarterly Meeting's Committee interfered to produce a separation in Swanzey Monthly Meeting.” “The accounts given by both parties of the Monthly

Meeting of Swanzey, at which the separation took place, agree in stating, that although the clerk of that meeting, (whom both acknowledge to have been in that station, when the meeting adjourned the month before,) had taken his seat at the table, the whole transaction of proposing a new clerk, by one who was not a member of the Meeting, his being united with by a part of the members, and by others who were not members, and the friend proposed proceeding to act as clerk, was consummated *before* any minute opening the meeting had been read, or any minute from the Quarterly Meeting read."

"Now we think it undeniable, that no portion of the members of a Monthly Meeting, even supposing them to be a greater number, which in this instance does not appear to have been the case, could be justified in thus acting, but that *they must by such an act subject themselves to all the consequences of separating from their monthly meeting, and setting up a meeting unauthorized by Discipline.*"

"And those members who thus separated from Swanzey Monthly Meeting, cannot plead the authority of the Quarterly Meeting for the course they pursued, inasmuch as those who proposed it, and assisted therein, had exhibited no minute from that meeting, directing the Monthly Meeting to be reorganized, and clothing them with power to act in the case." "To us therefore, it appears *clear*, that the meeting which with the old clerk at the table, proceeded in the transaction of its business after the other had adjourned, *in no way lost its standing as Swanzey Monthly Meeting*, and that the *others separated from it*. And that *those who in Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting received the Report from the latter, and rejected that from the former, IDENTIFIED themselves with the separate meeting.*" Does not the *same decision apply to yearly meetings, which receive Reports and Epistles from meetings of separatists, and reject those from the meetings of Friends?* That it does so apply, we think no candid person can deny. And that it has been so understood, the following extracts will show.

In an anonymous Pamphlet, entitled "Considerations," addressed to the members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in 1846, by Charles Evans, are the following remarks: "The Larger Body" [in New England Yearly Meeting] "acknowledged the representatives of the *Quarterly Meeting set up [by the Gurney party] in the manner*

which has been described, [which shows that they *received the Report* containing the names of said representatives,] and thus *identified* itself with the meeting of Separatists, and with *all* the extraordinary measures pursued by the Yearly Meeting's Committee." Considerations, p. 83.

And after the late separation in Ohio Yearly Meeting, the editorial in the "Friend," referring to the Yearly Meeting in North Carolina which occurred after Ohio Yearly Meeting, uses this language: "We have not yet received any other information from the Yearly Meeting lately held in North Carolina, than that it has *identified itself with the Separatists* in Ohio."—"Friend," 11th month, 25th, 1854.

This was done by receiving the Report or Epistle from the separate meeting, and rejecting that from the meeting of Friends.

*It is well known* that Indiana, London and Dublin Yearly Meetings and a large body in Baltimore and New York Yearly Meetings, *identified themselves in the same way.*

"The acts to which we have now referred we believe to be the most prominent among the *causes* that produced the separation in New England Yearly Meeting, in 1845." See Report adopted by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1849.

Now, it appears by the statement made by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, that the first and *most prominent cause* of the separation in New England Yearly Meeting, was the attempt to procure the disownment of a minister for bearing testimony against the unsound doctrines of J. J. Gurney and others; being the same unsound doctrines which Philadelphia Yearly Meeting testified against in the "Appeal." The individual alluded to was John Wilbur, of whom the Philadelphia "Friend," in 1858, says, *He was "an upright and faithful minister."*

Out of the disorderly and irregular treatment of John Wilbur, grew confusion, which produced its natural fruit, separation; for we find stated as the 8th cause, that the *Quarterly Meeting's Committee* aided in making a separation in Swanzey Monthly Meeting, and left that Meeting and set up another, out of the order of our Religious Society. In its course it reached the Quarterly Meeting, and *there a large company joined with the body of Separatists from Swanzey Monthly Meeting. A few remained who sustained the Meeting, and in no wise lost their standing as Rhode Island Quarterly Meet-*

*ing of Friends.* It is well known that a large number of members in New England, joined themselves to that spurious and separate Quarterly Meeting of Rhode Island, (by receiving its Report in the Yearly Meeting and rejecting the Report from the Quarterly Meeting of Friends,) and they claim, as do the Hicksites, to be the true Society of Friends.

It may be well now again to refer the reader to the "Appeal for the Ancient Doctrines," page 62, to show that the tendency of the new doctrines is to destroy the very existence of the Society.

In 1854, a large body of members seceded from the Yearly Meeting of Friends in Ohio, and joined and identified themselves with the Separatists, the larger body of New England.

North Carolina Yearly Meeting, (as has been stated in the "Friend,") *identified* itself with the Ohio Separatists. This was done by receiving the Epistle or Report from the Separatists and rejecting that from Friends; and Indiana, London and Dublin Yearly Meetings, identified themselves in the same way; Indiana Yearly Meeting having gone farther than either of the others, as will be seen by their Minutes in 1856, and since then, London, Dublin and N. Carolina Yearly Meetings, have recognised it as a Yearly Meeting; also a large portion of the members of Baltimore and New York Yearly Meetings joined fellowship with those Separatists in Ohio. Friends had no ground to look for any of the above named Yearly Meetings taking a different course, for they all had *fully identified themselves before* with the Separatists in New England. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has ceased correspondence with those Yearly Meetings, and according to its *own discipline*, pages 70 and 71, *must, to be consistent*, testify that their meetings are not meetings of the Society of Friends, and Monthly Meetings should be encouraged to carry out the provisions thereof, and testify against individuals who may persist in attending those meetings of Separatists.

The *importance* of maintaining our Testimony and Discipline against Separatists, is shown by the following extract:—

"Should the *Society, or any part of it*, acknowledge Jonathan Binns as the Clerk," [of the Ohio Yearly Meeting,] "and the body acting with him as the Yearly Meeting, it would *tend to break down good order* and government in the proceedings of Meetings for Discipline, furnish a dangerous precedent to its members, on any occasion of dissatisfaction or disagreement, to bring forward in the same

irregular manner, the names of Clerks to suit their own purposes, and thus *encourage* and multiply these sorrowful and blighting *separations* within our borders," &c. "Friend," Vol. xxiii., page 43.

From the printed Minutes of Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends, (so called,) held at Whitewater, Wayne Co., Indiana, on 5th day, the 2d of the 10th month, 1856, the following are extracted:—

On page 18 of the printed Minutes, No. 33, (the Minutes are all numbered,) it states—"The Friends appointed at last Yearly Meeting, on the proposition for attaching the Quarterly Meeting of Alum Creek to Ohio Yearly Meeting, [of which J. Binns was clerk,] now make the following report; which, *having had the consideration of this meeting*, and the meeting having been informed by the epistle from Ohio of their concurrence, *is united with*, and that Quarterly Meeting is accordingly given up, to be annexed to "Ohio Yearly Meeting" [of Separatists.] *It will be understood*, therefore, that *they* make their next report to "Ohio Yearly Meeting," and appoint representatives to attend the same.

"Our Committee on Epistles *are directed* to bring in a paragraph in the Epistle to Ohio, informing them thereof.

"The Clerk *is directed* to supply Alum Creek Quarterly Meeting with a copy of the Minutes.

"*It is also understood* that Alum Creek Quarterly Meeting, and the members thereof, *will become accountable* to Ohio Yearly, *from and after the reception of the Minutes of this Yearly Meeting*, as above in the case.

## REPORT.

### *To the Yearly Meeting:*

"We the Committee, appointed by last Yearly Meeting, to meet with Committees of Ohio Yearly Meeting and Alum Creek Quarterly Meeting, to confer on the subject of attaching that Quarterly Meeting to Ohio Yearly Meeting, attended to the appointment, and met at Gilead Meeting House, in the 6th month last, with a Committee from each of those Meetings, and the result of our joint de-

liberations we herewith submit to the Yearly Meeting, together with a Minute of Alum Creek Quarterly Meeting."

Moses Coppock, John Hadley, Jr., Henry Wilson, Exum Morris, Jacob Todhunter, Isaac Hollingsworth, Mordecai Hyatt, Mary Roberts, Jemima Burson, Harriet Steer, Naomi Coffin, Jane Johnson, Louisa Moore.	}	Committee.
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*Tenth Month, 2d, 1856.*

"At Alum Creek Quarterly Meeting of Friends, Gilead, Sixth Month, 30th, 1856.

"The Joint Committee appointed in Twelfth Month last to confer with Committees of Ohio and Indiana Yearly Meetings, most of whom are at this time very acceptably with us, upon the proposition to attach this Quarterly Meeting to Ohio Yearly Meeting, now make their Report as below."

*To the Quarterly Meeting:*

"The Committee appointed to meet and confer with Committees of Ohio and Indiana Yearly Meeting, have attended to the appointment, and herewith submit the result of their deliberations."

On behalf of the Committee,

JONATHAN WOOD,  
MARY WOOD.

*Gilead, Sixth Month, 28th, 1856.*

"The United Committee of Men and Women Friends, appointed by Ohio and Indiana Yearly Meetings and Alum Creek Quarterly Meeting, to meet in conference on the general interest of the Society, with a view of attaching Alum Creek Quarterly Meeting to Ohio Yearly Meeting, agreeably to a proposition of that Yearly Meeting, mostly met at Gilead Meeting House, and taking the subject under solid consideration, a full and free expression of sentiment and feeling was given in Christian love, and the Committees

*of the Yearly Meetings, and most of the Quarterly Meeting's Committee, were united in believing, that it might be to the advancement of the cause of truth, (!) and promote the best interests of Society, to attach Alum Creek Quarterly Meeting to Ohio Yearly Meeting, if that Quarterly Meeting unite therewith."*

On behalf of the Committee,

AARON L. BENEDICT, *Clerk.*

"The foregoing Report having been read, was freely and weightily considered by the Meeting, (men and women Friends deliberating together,) which became united in believing that truth sanctions the movement, and it is the solid judgment of the Meeting, that this Quarterly Meeting be annexed to Ohio Yearly Meeting, which is submitted to that and Indiana Yearly Meetings."

By direction and on behalf of the Meeting.

GRIFITH LEVERING, } *Clerks.*  
EDITH WILLIAMS, }

JOSEPH MORRIS, Jr., *Correspondent.*

By a Minute of Indiana Yearly Meeting in 1857, No. 72, page 52, it appears that "John Meader, a minister, has attended this Meeting in the course of a religious visit, and produced a certificate of unity, &c., . . . . . endorsed by Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting of Friends. . . . . His company and religious services have been acceptable and satisfactory." Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in its report of 1849 says, that Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, (alluded to above,) identified itself with Separatists; and I have been credibly informed, that John Meader had been disowned by Friends of the true Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting.

By the above Minutes of Indiana Yearly Meeting, it will be seen how fully they have identified themselves with Separatists. Again, on Minute No. 53, page 41, 1856, is as follows:—"The Meeting unites in directing that 8000 copies (!) of the Minutes of our present Yearly Meeting be printed for distribution among our families."

And in Minute No. 40, page 33, in 1857, is the same direction given.

Now the right of membership rests in Monthly Meetings. These Meetings are the executive members which carry out the directions and Discipline of the Yearly Meeting, and distribute documents, &c.,

issued by that Meeting; and thus by uniting year after year in following these instructions, and sending up their quotas, &c., those Meetings become fully identified with the transactions of the Yearly Meeting, and consequently with the Separatists. Hence, individual members of those Monthly Meetings, cannot plead ignorance, for it is presumed that every family had a copy of the Yearly Meeting's Minutes in 1856 and 1857.\* Neither does it appear well for members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to profess ignorance of these things, for they were not done in a corner: accounts of Indiana Yearly Meeting being annually published in periodicals which are circulated extensively among our members.

It is believed that a more deliberate and open violation of our Christian testimony against Separatists, cannot be found in the annals of our Society. A separation proposed by a body of Seceders in Ohio, agreed to by Indiana Yearly Meeting, and joined in with by Alum Creek Quarterly Meeting, and the whole proceeding recorded on the Minutes of the (so called) Indiana Yearly Meeting *by which Meeting it was consummated*; and eight thousand copies of these minutes sent down to the families of its members. And yet, in the face of these facts, many friends in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, *approve and unite in sending certificates of membership to, and receiving them from Meetings which are subordinate to bodies of Separatists.*

By these things the hearts of the righteous have been made sad, and an afflicted remnant do sigh and cry for the wasting and desolation throughout our borders.

Friends in 1829, felt the necessity of and were led to make a rule of discipline for their *future* government.

The Discipline of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting is as follows:

*"If any of our members should attend the Meetings of those who have separated from us, and who have set up Meetings contrary to the order and discipline of our Religious Society, or should attend any of the marriages accomplished among the said people, or sign certificates issued on those occasions, as it is giving countenance to and acknowledging those meetings as though they were the meetings of Friends; this Meeting declares that such conduct is of*

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\* Salem Quarterly Meeting of Friends, in Iowa, has not become identified with the Separatists, but has been sustained.



evil tendency and repugnant to the harmony and well-being of our Religious Society; and where such instances occur, Friends are desired to extend brotherly care and labour, that the individuals may be instructed and reclaimed, and if those endeavours prove ineffectual, Monthly Meetings *should testify against them.*" Discipline, pages 70 and 71.

It may be said by some, that the above Discipline was made at the time of the Hicksite separation. But that *does not lessen its authority*, and as the term Separatists is used instead of Hicksites, (which last term is not to be found in the book,) we may conclude it was made not only for that heresy, but to meet any other that might arise from similar causes, otherwise we might violate our Discipline on other subjects, on the plea that it was not made for us of this day.

According to the Discipline quoted above, "The giving countenance to and acknowledging Meetings, [of Separatists,] as though they were the Meetings of Friends," is declared to be "of evil tendency and repugnant to the harmony and well being of our Religious Society." And this rule of Discipline is as *binding* upon Yearly, Quarterly or Monthly Meetings as individuals. Have we not had sorrowful evidence of the violation of this rule, being repugnant to the harmony and well being of our Religious Society?

What distress have we been brought into by Monthly Meetings "acknowledging those Meetings as though they were the Meetings of Friends," by sending certificates to such Meetings, recommending our members to the Christian care of such, &c., in direct violation of our established order!

The following extracts will show the views and conclusions of Friends in 1828, concerning the heresy of that day. They were taken from a communication to the "Friend," which extends through five consecutive numbers, and is endorsed by the editor, and we have reason to believe by the conductors of that paper, in the following language, viz.:

"It is hoped, therefore, the *importance* and *intrinsic value* of the article, will be deemed a sufficient justification for the length to which it will *necessarily* be protracted, *more especially*, if, as we venture to predict will be the case, it increases in interest as it proceeds." "Friend," Vol. 2, p. 48.

"In this point of view, it became a matter of serious moment to

every member, what part he should take in the future sittings of the Yearly Meeting [Baltimore Yearly Meeting] of Hicksites, for such it had now become, [by receiving epistles and reports, &c., from the separatists, and entering into a correspondence with them.] If he continued to assemble with that party, he cut himself off from Friends by *his own voluntary act*. If, on the other hand, he withdrew from their assembly, he might retain his connexion with the great body of the Society of Friends in America and in England, and hold all the privileges of membership wherever the society was settled." "Friend," Vol. 2, p. 53.

"It will probably be said that comparatively a *few only* of the members of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, who joined themselves to the new sect, *actually hold* the unsound principles of Elias Hicks. We sincerely hope this is the fact, but *it does not change the state of the case*. Whether they themselves hold the principles or not, if they *unite* in a society capacity with those who do hold and openly avow them, *they lend their influence* in support of those principles, and sanction them by the language of *conduct* and example. They show their approbation of them by the *strongest evidence which can be given*, viz.: social unity and church-fellowship." Friend, Vol. 2, p. 53.

"It will be seen *clearly* from these premises, that the stand made by Friends, against this total defection from the Discipline and Doctrine of the Yearly Meeting of Baltimore, was strictly in accordance with the spirit and letter of the compact, under which that body was associated. That it was, in short, an *attempt to preserve inviolable a constitution which had been prepared and solemnly adopted under the influence of divine wisdom*. *It matters not how large the number may be who violate the compact*, break down the established constitution, and disregard the terms on which a right of membership in the Society of Friends can only be held. If it be  $\frac{1}{10}$ ,  $\frac{1}{20}$ , or  $\frac{1}{100}$ , *the principle remains the same*. Membership can only be enjoyed so long as the prescribed terms of it are complied with: the moment an individual violates those conditions, he voluntarily forfeits his right; and if the whole number of persons constituting a meeting act thus, they as fully and completely cease to be members of the society as any one of them would, if regularly disowned by the rest. *Numbers have no modifying influence upon the terms and principles of the association*. Any number, however

large or small, may secede from a society, and organize themselves anew under a different compact, but it is self-evident that they are not the society which they seceded from, even though they may assume its name." Friend, Vol. 2, p. 54.

"But if either of the Yearly Meetings, or any number of them, alter the principles which form the outward bond of union in the society, forsake the ancient and established organization, and join a new association holding different principles, they cease to be a constituent part of the Society of Friends." Friend, Vol. 2, p. 61.

Friends held the above to be true in 1829, and it is certainly as true in 1859, and as applicable to our society.

The following extract is from an epistle of the Meeting for sufferings of Ohio Yearly Meeting, dated, 3rd month, 1828.

"In this state of things *we feel bound* to caution our members against *joining in any degree* with this separation, a separation which must, to all those who enter into it, result in the loss of a right of membership in the Society of Friends. Its ground and origin is a departure from some of the most important doctrines of the Gospel as held by our predecessors, and by the primitive believers, and in its development *it has disregarded the order of society*, and the peace and prosperity of the church."—*Friend*, Vol. 1, p. 272. It is evident that *Hicksism* and *Gurneyism* sprang from the same root of unsound doctrines, and therefore *bear the same fruits*.

In an epistle of New York Yearly Meeting, dated in 1828, is the following language, viz.:

"That where the clerk, or other members of any Preparative, Monthly, or Quarterly Meetings, *recognise or acknowledge any of the meetings of the Separatists*, or, *in any other way identify themselves and the meeting they belong to, with those who have seceded from us*; or, where they refuse to pay that respect and subordination to this Yearly Meeting which the Discipline enjoins, and Friends, after patiently and *firmly* opposing these disorderly measures, find they are determined to pursue them; they should then proceed to appoint a suitable clerk, and hold said meetings in conformity with the *original design* of their institution."

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in 1849, decided who were the Separatists in New England; it is recorded on the minutes in a way that cannot be misunderstood: also, in 1855, who were the *Seceders from Ohio Yearly Meeting*; and "*the clerks and other members*," of our

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Meetings, ought "*to pay that respect and subordination to [our] Yearly Meeting, which the Discipline enjoins.*"

In the Discipline, Monthly Meetings are directed to testify against those who *persist* in "acknowledging those Meetings [of Separatists] as though they were the Meetings of Friends." [Not to send them certificates.]

I think *none* who have attended our Yearly Meeting for the last twelve years, *can* plead ignorance of these decisions, without manifesting a lukewarm and indifferent feeling for the welfare of our Religious Society.

In conclusion, let us give good heed to the following remarks of John Griffith.

"I have further to remark, that I have observed a prevailing disposition in some of considerable eminence in the Society, and in a great many others, to cry up for peace and charity, and the maintenance of unity, and not to press any thing very closely, lest the peace of the Society should thereby be endangered; although, perhaps the thing urged *cannot* well be objected to upon any other principle than groundless fears and a faint heart, not yet quite upright to God, nor wholly redeemed from the praise of men; as there is an unwillingness to displease them, though in maintaining the Lord's cause; "For if I yet please men," said Paul, "I should not be the servant of Christ." What makes me take notice of this, is, that I have seen a great snare in it; *wrong things being suffered to remain and prevail* under it, and the fire of primitive zeal against undue liberty, much quenched. We have no such examples in the prophets, or in Christ and his apostles, of indulgence and winking at wrong things, and false ease."

"*They in their concern to testify against such things, had no fear of breaking unity, nor of disturbing the peace and quiet of any people*, let their rank or station be what it may. Had this noble spirit of ancient zeal been more generally exercised in plain dealing, and speaking the truth to one another, the mournful "declension justly complained of amongst us as a people would not so generally prevail." ("Friend," vol. xviii. p. 398.)

*Philada., Third Month, 24th, 1859.*











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